

**TESTIMONY OF JON PEPE, AFSCME LOCAL 391 PRESIDENT**  
**RE: HOUSE BILL 5803**  
**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**APRIL 5, 2011**

Good afternoon Madame Chair and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Jon Pepe; I am president of the Connecticut State Prison Employees Union AFSCME Local 391. I represent 1,800 members working at eight prisons in Enfield, Somers and Suffield.

I am here to speak against Bill 5803, which concerns freezing my members pay if there is high unemployment. My members feel this is a direct attack on their livelihood.

Any wages they receive have been received through the collective bargaining process. This bill undermines Collective Bargaining. Remember, through collective bargaining my members have already had contracts rejected, year(s) of no raises and delays. The process, as it currently exists has worked for Connecticut.

Currently our bargaining unit is in contract negotiations and bills like this undermine the process and foster frustration and resentment.

My members feel that they are under attack; not from the inmates they watch, but by people introducing bills such as HB 5803.

My members are not complaining about their jobs; they walk the toughest beat in Connecticut. They are just requesting your vote against this bill because it hurts middle class workers.

Thank you.